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NARRATIVE

OF

Remarkable Occurrences,

IN THE LIFE OF

JOHN BLATCHFORD,

Of Cape-Ann, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

CONTAINING,

An account of his treatment and sufferings, while a prisoner in the late war, in *Nova-Scotia*---the *West-Indies*---*Great-Britain*---*France*, and the *East-Indies*.

Taken from his own mouth.

SECOND EDITION.

U.S.A.

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NARRATIVE, &c.

IN June 1777, I shipped myself as cabin-boy on board the Continental ship Hancock, John Manly, Esq. commander, I being then in the 15th year of my age; and a few days after sailed on a cruize. Being out some days we fell in with and took the Fox, a British frigate of 28 guns, after an engagement of four glasses. Capt. Manly sent on board the prize as many men as we could spare, and both ships kept company several days, till on the 8th of July we fell in with the British ships Rainbow of 40 guns, and Flora of 32 guns (who had in company the brig Cabot of 16 guns, which had just before been taken by the Milford British frigate) by whom we were both taken, and carried into Halifax.

I was kept prisoner, among a number of my countrymen, on board the Rainbow, until we arrived at Halifax. On our arrival there we were taken on shore and confined in a prison which had formerly been a sugar-house. — The large number of prisoners confined in this house (near 300) together with a scanty allowance of provisions, occasioned it to be very sickly. So irksome a situation put us upon meditating an escape — but we could form no plan that was likely to be attended with success, till George Barnard, who had been a midshipman in the Hancock, and who was confined in the same room with myself, concerted a plan for our release, which was to be effected by digging a small passage under ground, to extend to a garden that was behind the prison and without the prison wall, where we might make a breach in the night with safety, and probably all obtain our liberty. This plan greatly elated our spirits, and we were anxious to proceed immediately in executing of it.

Our cabbins were built one above another, from the floor to the height of a man's head ; and mine being one of those built on the floor, was pitched upon to be taken up :—this being done, six of us agreed to do the work, whose names were, George Barnard and William Atkins of Boston (late midshipman in the Hancock), Lemuel Fowle of Cape-Ann, Isaiah Churchill of Plymouth, Asa Cole of Wethersfield, and myself. We took up the cabbins and cut a hole in the plank under it.

The sugar-house stood upon a foundation of stone, which raised the floor four feet above the ground, and gave us sufficient room to work, and to convey away the dirt that we dug up. The instruments which we had to work with were one scraper, one long spike and some sharp sticks ; with these we proceeded in our difficult undertaking. As the hole was too small to admit of more than one person to work at a time, we dug by turns ten or twelve days, and carried the dirt in our bosoms to another part of the cellar ; by this time we supposed we had dug far enough, and word was given out among the prisoners to prepare themselves for flight. But while we were in the midst of gaiety, congratulating each other on our happy prospects, we were basely betrayed by one of our own countrymen, whose name was Knowles : he had been a midshipman in the Boston frigate, and was put on board the Fox when she was taken by the Hancock and Boston. What could have induced him to commit so vile an action cannot be conceived, as no advantage could accrue to him from our detection, and death was the certain consequence to many of his miserable countrymen—that it was so, is all I can say. A few hours before we were to have attempted our escape, Knowles informed the sergeant of the guard (Mr. Bible) of our design ; and by his treachery lost his country the lives of more than a hundred valuable citizens—fathers and husbands—whose return would have rejoiced the hearts of now weeping fathers

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When we were discovered, the whole guard was ordered into the room; and being informed by Knowles who it was that performed the work, we were all six confined in irons—the hole was filled up, and a centinel constantly placed in the room, to prevent any further attempt. We were all kept in close confinement till two of my fellow sufferers Barnard and Cole, died; one of which was put into the ground with his irons on his hands. I was afterwards permitted to walk the yard. But as my irons were too small and caused my hands to swell, and made them very sore, I asked the sergeant to take them off and give me larger ones,—he being a person of humanity, and compassionating my sufferings, changed my irons for others that were larger, and more easy to my hands.

Knowles, who was likewise permitted to walk the yard, for his perfidy, would take every opportunity to insult and mortify me, by asking me whether I wanted to run away again? and when I was going home, &c?—His daily affronts, together with his conduct in betraying of his countrymen, so exasperated me, that I wished for nothing more than for an opportunity to convince him that I did not love him. One day as he was tantalizing over me as usual, I suddenly drew one hand out of my irons, flew at him and struck him in the face, knocked out two or three of his teeth, and bruised his mouth very much. He cried out, that the prisoner had got loose—but before any assistance came, I had put my hand again into the hand-cuff, and was walking about the yard as usual. When the guard came, they demanded of me in what manner I struck him? I told them with both my hands. They then tried to pull my hands out, but could not, and concluded it must be as I had said;—some laughed and some were angry—but in the end I was ordered again into prison. The

next day I was sent on board the Greyhound frigate, capt. Dickson, bound on a cruize in Boston-bay. After being out a few days, we met with a severe gale of wind, in which we sprung our main-mast and received considerable other damage. We were then obliged to bear away for the W. Indies, and on our passage fell in with and took a brig from Norwich, laden with stock, &c. The captain and hands were put on board a Danish vessel the same day. We carried the brig into Antigua, where we immediately repaired, and were ordered in company with the Vulture sloop of war, to convoy a fleet of merchantmen to New-York. We left the fleet off Sandy-hook, and sailed for Philadelphia, where we lay till we were made a packet and ordered for Halifax with dispatches. We had a quick passage, and arrived safe. While we lay in the road, admiral Byron arrived in the Princess Royal from England, who being short of men, and we having a surplusage for a packet, many of our men were ordered on board the Princess-Royal, and among them most of our boat's crew.

Soon after, some of the officers going on shore, I was ordered into the boat. We landed at the Governor's slip—it being then near night. This was the first time since I had been on board the Greyhound that I had to escape from her, as they were before this particularly careful of me; therefore I was determined to get away then if possible, and to effect it waded round a wharf and went up a by-way (fearing I should meet the officers): I soon got into the street and made the best of my way towards Irish-town, where I expected to be safe;—but unfortunately while running, I was met and stopped by an emissary, who demanded of me my business, and where I was going? I endeavoured to deceive him, that he might let me pass; but it was in vain—he ordered me to follow him:—I offered him what money I had (about 7/6 sterl.) to let me go—this too was ineffectual. I then told him I was an American and mak-

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Greyhound frigate, Boston-bay. After a severe gale of wind, and received confinement obliged to bear a passage fell in with and took stock, &c. The ship and a Danish vessel went into Antigua, where I was ordered in company to convoy a fleet of merchant ships off Sandy-where we lay till we for Halifax with dispatch, and arrived safe — Byron arrived in the ship being short of men, packet, many of our officers-Royal, and a few.

Going on shore, I was ordered at the Governor's — this was the first time on the Greyhound that I had to perform this particularly determined to get away from round a wharf and to meet the officers): I did the best of my way to get to be safe; — but I was met and stopped by some of my business, and tried to deceive him, was in vain—he ordered him what money I had—this too was ineffective in American and mak-

ing my escape from a long confinement, and was determined to pass, and took up a stone. He immediately drew his bayonet and ordered me to go back with him. I refused, and told him to keep his distance. He then ran upon me, and pushing his bayonet into my side, it came out near my navel; but the wound was not very deep; he then made a second pass and stabbed me through my arm: he was about to stab me a third time, when I struck him with the stone and knocked him down. I then ran, but the guard which had been alarmed, immediately took me, and carried me before the governor (Hughes), where I understood the man was dead. I was threatened with every kind of death, and ordered out of the governor's presence.

Whilst in confinement I was informed by a young gentleman (who was to be sent to England and tried for killing a man in a duel) that it was not in the power of the governor to try me; but that I should be sent to England; which I found to be true. The next day I was sent on board the Greyhound, the ship I had run from, and we sailed for England. Our captain being a humane man, ordered my irons off, a few days after we sailed, and permitted me to do duty as formerly. Being out thirteen days we spoke the Hazard sloop of war, who inform'd that the French fleet was then cruising in the English channel:—for this reason we put into Cork, and the dispatches were forwarded to England.—While we lay in the Cove of Cork, I jumped overboard, with intention of getting away; but unfortunately I was discovered and fired at by the mariners: the boat was immediately sent after me, took me up and carried me on board again. At this time almost all the officers were on shore, and the ship was left in charge of the sailing-master, one Drummond, who beat me most cruelly;—to get out of his way I ran forward—he followed me, and as I was running back he came up with me and threw me down the main hold. The fall, together

with the beating, was so severe that I was deprived of my senses for a considerable time; when I recovered them I found myself in the carpenter's birth, placed upon some old canvass, between two chests, having my right thigh, leg and arm broken, and several parts of my body severely bruised. In this situation I lay eighteen days, till our officers (who had been on business to Dublin) came on board. The captain enquired for the prisoner, and being informed of my situation, came down with the doctor to set my bones, but finding them callus'd they concluded not to meddle with me.

The ship lay at Cork till the French fleet left the channel, and then sailed for Spithead.—On our arrival there I was sent in irons on board the *Princes-Amelia*, and the next day was carried on board the *Britannia*, in Portsmouth harbour, to be tried before Sir Thomas Pye, lord high admiral of England, and president of the court-martial.

Before the officers had collected, I was put under the care of a centinel; and the seamen and women who came board compassionated my sufferings, which rather heightened than diminished my distress. I was sitting under the awning, almost overpowered by the reflection of my unhappy situation, every moment expecting to be summoned for my trial, when I heard somebody enquiring for the prisoner—supposing it to be an officer, I rose up and answered, that I was there. The gentleman came to me, told me to be of good cheer, and taking out a bottle of cordial bid me drink, which I did:—he then enquired where I belonged—I informed him—he asked me if I had parents living, and if I had any friends in England?—I answered I had neither: he then assured me he was my friend, and would render me all the assistance in his power. He then enquired of me every circumstance relative to my fray with the man at Halifax, for whose death I was now to be tried;—and instructed me what to say on my trial—told me if I

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was asked in court "if I had any friend or attorney to speak for me," to look at such a corner of the state-room, where I should see him, and to answer the court "Yes, Mr. Thomas," for that was the gentleman's name. All this was spoken in so friendly a manner, that I could not distrust him, although what he had instructed me to say, appeared to me, would be against myself.

The court having assembled, I was called in and examined partly, and on being asked "If I had any friend to speak in my behalf?" I looked round, and saw Mr. Thomas, and answered, "Yes, Mr. Thomas," who then came forward. The court asked him what he had to say in behalf of the prisoner?—On which he desired them to question the prisoner, and if he could not answer sufficiently, he would speak for him. I was then asked if I meant to kill the man? I answered as instructed (tho' loth), that I did. The court seemed surpriz'd, and asked me the question again, and I answered, Yes. I was then asked if I should have hurt the man had he not molested me? I replied, No.—I was then asked many other questions, and if I was not sorry I had undertaken in the rebellion against my king?—Mr. Thomas then spoke, and said it was hardly fair to ask me such a question upon this occasion; and that considering my youth, I had given as fair an account of myself as could be expected.—He spoke a considerable time on the subject, and concluded with comparing our combat to a field battle between two armies—expatiated largely and explained the subject so clearly that no answer was made to his arguments.—I was ordered to withdraw, and waited with painful impatience to know my destiny.—This was repeated two or three times, till at last I was called in and acquitted of the murder, and informed that I was to be sent back to Halifax, to be exchanged as a prisoner of war. I cannot express my feelings on this occasion, and no one can know them, but by experiencing the same reverse of fortune.

I immediately found my benefactor and returned him thanks, with gratitude for his friendly and benevolent assistance. Mr. Thomas then asked the liberty of taking me on shore with him, engaging to return me the next day—and liberty was granted him.—He told a young lad, his son, to walk with me about Portsmouth, and shew me the town, and then to carry me home to his house; which he did. In the evening Mr. Thomas came into the kitchen and asked me to walk into the parlour, to satisfy the curiosity of some ladies, who had never seen a Yankee, as they called me: I went in, and they seemed greatly surprised to see me look like an Englishman; they said they were sure I was no Yankee, but like themselves. The idea they had formed of the Americans was nearly the same as we have of the natives of this country. When the ladies had satisfied their curiosity, Mr. Thomas put a guinea into his hat, and carrying it round asked the ladies to contribute for the poor Yankee; he then gave me the money, (about four guineas.)

The next morning I was sent on board the Princess-Amelia, where I spent a joyful day; expecting soon to be sent on board the Greyhound, which was bound to Halifax. In the evening I heard a boat coming alongside, and supposing it to belong to the Greyhound, (as the people in the boat enquired for me)—I made haste and jumped into the boat; but to my extreme disappointment and grief, I was carried on board an Indian-man, and immediately put down into the run, where I was confined seven days. I begged that I might send word on shore to my former benefactor, and inform him of my situation, but they would not grant it. On the seventh day I heard the boatswain pipe all hands, and about noon I was called upon deck, when I found myself on board the Princess Royal indianman, Capt. Robert Kerr;—we were then off the Isle of Wight, bound to the East-Indies, in company with six others, viz. the

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Ceres, Hawke, Prince, Sandwich, Walpole and True-
 Briton, all large ships, belonging to the East-India
 company. Our captain told me, if I behaved well and
 did my duty, I should receive as good usage as any
 man on board:—this gave me great encouragement.
 I now found my destiny was fixed—that whatever I
 could do, would not in the least alter my situation, and
 therefore was determined to do the best I could, and
 make myself as contented as my unfortunate situation
 would admit.

After being on board several days, I found there were
 in the Princess-Royal, eighty-two Americans, all des-
 tined to the East-Indies, for being what they called Re-
 bels. We had a passage of seventeen weeks to St. He-
 lena, where we put in and landed part of our cargo,
 (which consisted wholly of provisions) and some of the
 soldiers who were brought out for that island. The ship
 lay here about three weeks; we then sailed for Batavia
 --and on the passage touched at the Cape of Good-
 Hope, where we found the whole of the fleet that sail-
 ed with us from England—we took in some provisions
 and necessaries and set sail for Batavia, where we arriv-
 ed in ten weeks. Here we purchased a large quantity
 of arrack and remained a considerable time.

We then sailed for Bencoolen, in the island of Suma-
 tria, and after a passage of about six weeks arrived there,
 (this was in June 1780.) At this place the Americans
 were all carried on shore; and I found that I was no
 longer to remain on board the ship, but condemned to
 serve as a soldier for five years.—I offered to bind
 myself to the captain for five years, or any longer term,
 if I might serve on board the ship:—he told me it was
 impossible for me to be released from acting as a sol-
 dier, unless I could pay fifty pounds sterling. As I was
 unable to do this, I was obliged to go through the ma-
 nual exercise with the other prisoners; among whom
 was William Randall of Boston, and Josiah Folger of

Nantucket; both young men, and one of them an old ship-mate of mine;—these two and myself agreed to behave as ignorant and awkward as possible; and what motions we learned one day we were to forget the next. We pursued this conduct near a fortnight, and were beaten every day by the drill-sergeant, who exercised us; and when he found we were determined in our obstinacy, and that it was not possible for him to learn us any thing, we were all three sent into the pepper gardens belonging to the East-India company, and continued picking peppers from morning till night, and allowed but two scanty meals a day;—this, together with the amazing heat of the sun, (the island lying under the equator) was too much for an American constitution, unused to a hot climate, and we expected that we should soon end our misery and our lives;—but Providence still preserved us for greater hardships*.

The Americans died daily with heat and hard fare, which determined my two companions and myself in an endeavour to make our escape.——We had been in the pepper gardens four months when an opportunity offered, and we resolved upon trying our fortune;—Folger, Randall and myself sat out with an intention of reaching Croy, (a small harbour where the Dutch often touch at to water) on the opposite side of the island.—Folger had by some means got a bayonet, which he fixed on the end of a stick—Randall and myself had nothing but staves, which were all the weapons we carried with us. We provided ourselves with fire-works for our journey, which we pursued unmolested till the fourth day just at night, when we heard a rust-

* Sumatra is an island of the Indian ocean, situated between 93 and 104 degrees of East longitude, and between 5 degrees and 30 minutes North and 5 degrees and 30 minutes South latitude; extending from N. W. to S. E. 900 miles long, and from 100 to 150 broad, separated from the continent of the Further India by the straits of Malacca on the N. E. and from the island of Java by the straits of Sunda on the S. E. This island lying under the equator, and the low grounds near the sea coast being flooded one half of the year, is very unhealthful. The natives build most of their houses upon pillars, to secure them against the annual inundations.

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ling in the bushes, and discovered nine seapoys, (coun-
try-born soldiers in the British service) who suddenly
rushed out upon us. Folgier being the most resolute of
us, run at one of them and pushed his bayonet through
his body into a tree; Randall knocked down another;
—but they overpowered us, bound us, and carried us
back to the fort, which we reached in one day and half,
though we had been four days travelling from it, owing
to the circle we made by going round the shore; and
they came across the woods, being acquainted with the
way. Immediately on our arrival at the fort the go-
vernor called a court-martial, to have us tried.—We
were soon all condemned to be shot the next morning
at seven o'clock, and ordered to be sent into the dun-
geon and confined in irons, where we were attended
by an adjutant who brought a priest with him to pray
and converse with us;—but Folgier, who hated the
name and sight of an Englishman, desired that we might
be left alone, and not be troubled with any company:
—the clergyman reprimanded him, and told him he
made very light of his situation, on supposition that he
would be reprieved; but if he expected it he deceived
himself:—Folgier still persisted in the clergyman's leav-
ing of us, if he would have us make our peace with
God; for, said he, the sight of Englishmen, from whom
we have received such treatment, is more disagreeable
than the evil spirits of whom you have spoken:—that
if he could have his choice, he would choose death in
preference to life, if he must have it on conditions of
such barbarous usage as he had received from their
hands; and that the thoughts of death did not seem so
hideous to him as his past sufferings. He visited us
again about midnight, but finding his company was not
acceptable, he soon left us to our own melancholy re-
flections.

Before sun-rise we heard the drum beat, and soon after

heard the direful noise of the door grating on its iron hinges—we were all taken out, our irons taken off, and we conducted by a strong guard of soldiers to the parade, surrounded by a circle of armed men, and led into the midst of them, where three white coffins were placed by our side: silence was then commanded, and the adjutant taking a paper out of his pocket read our sentence:—and now I cannot describe my feelings upon this occasion, nor can it be felt by any one but those who have experienced some remarkable deliverance from the grim hand of death, when surrounded on all sides, and nothing but death expected from every quarter, and by Divine Providence there is some way found out for escape—so it seemed to me when the adjutant pulled out another paper from his pocket and read, “that the governor and council, in consideration of the youth of Randall and myself, (supposing us to be led on by Folgier, who was the eldest) thought fit to pardon us from death, and that instead we were to receive eight hundred lashes each;”—although this last sentence appeared terrible to me, yet in comparison with death, it seemed to be light.—Poor Folgier was shot in our presence—previous to which we were told we might go and converse with him—Randall went and talked with him first, and after him I went up to take my leave, but my feelings were such at the time that I had not power to utter a single word to my departing friend, who seemed as undaunted and seemingly as willing to die as I was willing to be released—and told me not to forget the promises we had formerly made each other, which was, to embrace the first opportunity to escape:—we parted, and he was immediately after shot dead. We were next taken and tied; and the adjutant brought a small whip made of cotton, which consisted of a number of strands and knotted at the ends; but these knots were all cut off by the adjutant before the drummer took it, which made it not worse than to have been whipt with cotton

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yarn. After being whipped 800 lashes we were sent to the company hospital, where we had been about three weeks when Randall told me he intended very soon to make his escape :—this somewhat surpris'd me, as I had lost all hopes of regaining my liberty, and supposed he had :—I told him I had hoped he would never mention it again ; but however, if that was his design, I would accompany him. He advised me, (if I was fearful) to tarry behind ;—but finding he determined on going, I resolv'd to run the risque once more ; and as we were then in the hospital we were not suspected of such a design.

Having provided ourselves with fire-works and knives, about the first of December 1780, we sat out, with intention of reaching the Dutch settlement of Croy, which is but about two or three hundred miles distance upon a direct line, but as we were obliged to travel along the sea coast, (fearing to risque the nearest way) it was a journey of eight hundred miles. We took each a stick and hung round our neck, and every day cut a notch, which was the method we took to keep time.—In this manner we travelled, living on fruit, turtle-eggs and some turtle, which we cooked every night, with the fire we built to sleep by to secure us from wild beasts—they being here in great plenty, such as buffaloes, tigers, jackanapes, leopards, lions, baboons and monkies. On the 30th day of our travelling we met with nothing we could eat, and found no water—at night we found some fruit which appeared to the eye to be very delicious, (different from any we had seen in our travel), it resembles a fruit which grows in the West-Indies, called a Jack, about the size of an orange :—we being very dry and hungry immediately gathered some of this fruit—but finding it a sweet sickish taste I eat but two—Randall eat freely :—in the evening we found we were poisoned : I was sick and puked considerably :—Randall was sick and began to

swell all round his body ; he grew worse all night, but continued to have his senses till the next day, when he died, and left me to mourn my greater wretchedness,—more than 400 miles from any settlement—no companion—the wide ocean on one side and a prowling wilderness on the other—liable to many kinds of deaths, more terrible than being shot. I laid down by Randall's body, wishing if possible that he might return and tell me what course to take.—My thoughts almost distracted me, so that I was unable to do any thing till the next day ; during all which time I continued by the side of Randall—I then got up and made a hole in the sand and buried him.

I now continued my journey as well as my weak state of body would permit ; the weather being at this time extreme hot and rainy.—I frequently lay down and would wish that I might never rise again :—depair had almost wholly possessed me ; and sometimes in a kind of delirium would fancy I heard my mother's voice, and my friends calling me, and I would answer them :—at other times my wild imagination would paint to my view scenes which I was well acquainted with, then supposing myself near home I would run as fast as my feeble legs could carry me :—frequently I fancied that I heard dogs bark, men cutting wood, and every noise which I have heard in my native country.

One day as I was travelling, a small dog, as I thought it to be, came fawning round me and followed me, but I soon discovered it to be a young lion ;—I supposed that its dam must be nigh, and therefore run ; it followed me sometime and then left me ;—I proceeded on, but had not got far from it before it began to cry ; I looked round and saw a lioness making towards it—she yelled most frightfully, which greatly terrified me ; but she laid down something from her mouth for her young one, and then with another yell turned and went off from me.

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Some days after, I was travelling by the edge of a woods, (which from its appearance had felt severely the effects of a tornado or hurricane, the trees being all torn up by the roots) and I heard a cracking noise in the bushes—looking about I saw a monstrous large tiger making slowly towards me, which frightened me exceedingly ; when he had approached within a few rods of me, in my surprize I suddenly lifted up my hands and hollowed very loud : this sudden noise frightened him, seemingly as much as I had been, and he immediately turned and run into the woods, and I saw him no more. After this I continued travelling on without molestation, only from the monkeys, who were here so plenty that oftentimes I saw them in large droves : some times I run from them as if afraid of them ; they would then follow, grin and chatter at me, and when they got near I would turn, and they would run back into the woods, and climb the trees to get out of my way.

It was now fifteen weeks since I had left the hospital—I had travelled most all the day without any water, and began to be very thirsty, when I heard the sound of running water, as it were down a fall of rocks—I had heard it a considerable time, and at last began to suspect it was nothing but imaginary, as many other noises I had before thought to have heard. I however went on as fast as I could, and at length discovered a brook—on approaching of it I was not a little surprized and rejoiced at the sight of a Female Indian, who was fishing at the brook :—she had no other dress on than that which mother nature affords impartially to all her children, except a small cloth which she wore round her waist.—I knew not how to address myself to her :—I was afraid if I spoke she would run—and therefore I made a small noise ; upon which she looked round, and seeing me, run across the brook, seemingly much frightened, leaving her fishing-line. I went up to her

basket, which contained five or six fish that looked much like our trout. I took up the basket and attempted to wade across where she had passed, but was too weak to wade across in that place, and went further up the stream, where I passed over—and then looking for the Indian woman I saw her at some distance behind a large cocoa-nut tree:—I walked towards her, but dare not keep my eyes steadily upon her lest she should run from me as she did before.—I called to her in English; and she answered in her own tongue, which I could not understand. I then called to her in the Malais, which I understood a little of:—she answered me in a kind of surprise, and asked me in the name of *Oerum Footee* (the name of their god) from whence I came, and where I was going?—I answered her as well as I could in the Malais, that I was from Fort-Marlbrough, and going to Croy—that I was making my escape from the English, by whom I had been taken in war.—She told me that she had been taken by the Malais some years before—for that the two nations were always at war; and that she had been kept as a slave among them three years, and was then retaken by her countrymen. Whilst we were talking together she appeared to be very shy, and I durst not go nearer than a rod to her, lest she should run from me. She said that Croy, the place I was bound to, was about three miles distance—that if I would follow her she would conduct me to her countrymen who were but a small distance off.—I begged her to plead with her countrymen to spare my life,—she said she would, and assured me that if I behaved well I should not be hurt. She then conducted me to a small village, consisting of huts or wigwams. When we arrived at the village, the children that saw me were frightened and run away from me—and the women expressed a great deal of fear, and kept at a distance—but my guide called to them and told them not to be afraid, for that I was not come to hurt them,—and then in-

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I told my guide that I was very hungry—and she sent the children for something for me to eat;—they came and brought me little round balls of boiled rice; and they not daring to come nigh, threw them to me—these I picked up and eat; afterwards a woman brought some rice and goats milk in a copper basin, and setting it on the ground, made signs to me to take it up and eat it, which I did, and then put it down again; they then poked away the basin with a stick, battered it with stones, and making a hole in the ground buried it.—After this they conducted me to a small hut, and told me to tarry there till the morning, when they would conduct me to the harbour. I had but little sleep that night, and was up several times to look out, and saw two or three Indians at a little distance from the hut, who I suppose were placed there to watch me. Early in the morning numbers came round the hut, and the female who was my guide, asked me where my country was?—I could not make her understand, only that it was at a great distance. She then asked me if my countrymen eat men? I told her no—and seeing some goats, pointed at them and told her we eat such as them.—She then asked me what made me white, and if it was not the white rain that come upon us when we were small? (How she came by this notion I know not, but suppose that while she was over with the Malays she had heard something of snow from them, as they carry on some trade with the English at Fort-Marlborough and Bencoolen.) And as I wished to please and satisfy them, I told them that I supposed it was—for it was only in certain seasons of the year that it fell, and in hot weather when it did not fall the people grew darker till it returned, and then the people all grew white again—this seemed to please them very much.

My protectors now brought a young man to me

who, she said, was her brother, and who would shew me the way to the harbour;—she then cut a stick about eight feet long, and he took hold of one end and gave me the other—she told me that she had instructed her brother what to say at the harbour. He then led off and I followed. During our walk I put out my hand to him several times, and made signs of friendship—
—but he seemed to be afraid of me, and would look upwards and then fall flat on the ground and kiss it—this he repeated as often as I made any sign or token of friendship to him.—When we had got near the harbour he made a sign for me to sit down upon a rock, which I did; he then left me and went, as I supposed, to talk with the people at the water concerning me; but I had not sit long before I saw a vessel coming round a point into the harbour.—They soon came on shore in the boat.—I went down to them and made my case known, and when the boat returned on board they took me with them. It was a Dutch snow bound from China to Batavia;—after they had wooded and watered they set sail for Batavia:—being out about three weeks we arrived there:—I tarried on board her about three weeks longer, and then got on board a Spanish ship which was from Rio de la Plate bound to Spain, but by stress of weather was forced to put into this port. After the vessel had repaired we sailed for Spain. When we made the Cape of Good-Hope we fell in with two British cruisers of 20 guns each, who engaged us and did the vessel considerable damage, but at length we beat them off, and then run for the coast of Brazils, where we arrived safe and began to work at repairing our ship, but upon examination she was found to be not fit to proceed on her voyage, she was therefore condemned. I then left her and got on board a Portuguese snow, bound up to St. Helena, and we arrived safe at that place. I then went on shore and quitted her, and engaged in the garrison there to do duty as a soldier for

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my provisions, till some ship should arrive there bound to England. After serving here a month, I entered on board a ship called the Stormont—but orders were soon after received that no Indian an should sail without convoy; and we lay here six months, during which time our captain (Montgomery) died.

While I was at St. Helena, the vessel which I came out from England in arrived here, homeward-bound; she being on the return from her second voyage since I came from England:—and now I made known my case to Captain Kerr, who readily took me on board the Princess-Royal, and used me kindly—and those of my old ship-mates on board were glad to see me again.—Captain Kerr at first seeing me, asked me if I was not afraid to let him know who I was? and endeavoured to frighten me; yet his conduct towards me was humane and kind.—It had been very sickly on board the Princess-Royal, and the greater part of the hands which came out of England in her had died, and she was now manned chiefly with lascars, (country born people); among those who had died was the boatswain and boatswain's mate, and Captain Kerr made me boatswain of the ship—in which office I continued until we arrived in London—and it protected me from being impressed at our arrival in England.

We sailed from St. Helena about the first of November 1781, under convoy of the Experiment of 50 guns, commanded by Captain Henry, and the Shark sloop of war of 18 guns—and we arrived in London about the first of March, 1782,—it having been about two years and a half from the time I had left it.

In about a fortnight after our arrival in London, I entered on board the King-George, store-ship bound to Antigua, and after four weeks passage arrived there—the second night after we came to anchor in Antigua, I took the ship's boat and made my escape in her to

Montserrat, which place had but just before been taken by the French.—Here I did not meet with the treatment which I expected; for on my arrival at Montserrat I was immediately taken up and put in prison, where I continued 24 hours, and my boat taken from me;—I was then sent to Guadaloupe, and examined by the governor.—I made known my case to him, by acquainting him with the misfortunes I had gone thro' in my captivity and in making my escape—he seemed to commiserate me—gave me ten dollars for the boat that I escaped in, and provided I should be on board a French brigantine that was bound from Guadaloupe to Philadelphia:—the vessel sailed in a few days—and now my prospects were favourable— but my misfortunes were not at an end—after being out 21 days, we fell in with the *Trite* and *Amphion*, two British cruizers, off the Capes of Delaware, by whom we were taken, carried into New-York, and put on board the *Jersey* prison-ship—after being on board about a week, a cartel was fitted out for France, and I was sent on board as a French prisoner:—The cartel was ordered for St. Malo's, and after a passage of 32 days we arrived safe at that place.

Finding no American vessel at St. Malo's, I went to the commandant and procured a pass to go by land to Port l'Orient; on my arrival there I found three American privateers belonging to Beverley, in Massachusetts. I was much elated at seeing so many of my countrymen, some of whom I was well acquainted with. I immediately entered on board the *Bucaneer*, Captain Phierion:—We sailed on a cruize, and after being out 18 days, we returned to l'Orient with six prizes.—Three days after our arrival in port we heard the joyful news of peace;—on which the privateer was dismantled, the people discharged, and Capt. Phierion sailed on a merchant voyage to Norway.

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I then entered on board a brig bound to Lisbon (Capt. Ellenwood of Beverly,) and arrived at Lisbon in eight days—we took in a cargo of salt, and sailed for Beverly, where we arrived the 9th of May, 1783,---- being now only 15 miles from home.——I immediately set out for Cape-Ann, went to my father's house and had an agreeable meeting with my friends after an absence of almost six years.

New-London, May 10, 1788.

JOHN BLATCHFORD.

[N. B. Those who are acquainted with the narrator will not scruple to give full credit to the foregoing account—and others may satisfy themselves by conversing with him. The scars he carries are proof of a part of his narrative—and a gentleman belonging to New-London, who was several months with him, was acquainted with part of his sufferings, tho' it was out of his power to relieve him——He is a poor man, with a wife and two children—His employment fishing and coasting.]



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